

long as the churches have charge of them in any form, they will render union impossible, and perpetually endanger its permanence. It is not the interest of the colleges to be under church management, and it is not the interest of the churches. Let them by all means get charters and beg for themselves. To suppose that any one of them, even the weakest, will allow its organisation to be interfered with, argues a simplicity to be credited only to few. They are joined to their idols—leave them alone. A college question rouses the whole fury of party spirit, and raises up such an army of partisans within and among the churches as must either defeat union or destroy it.

But though they have become a stumbling-block in the way, it has been chiefly by bringing out diversity of sentiment upon more important matters. The main controversies have sheltered themselves behind this educational question. Voluntaryism and spiritual independence are the real cause of much of the disagreement on the college question. Strong prejudices not definable or admitting of classification under either head, but more powerful than either, have also found in education a convenient mask. The true question is—are all parties prepared to return to the principles which they held in common ere separation took place. The proposed incorporation is more than a union. It is a *reunion*. A hundred and forty years ago, they were all one body. Then they all signed one standard and one only, and that is the Westminster Confession of Faith. So far from repudiating this, each has claimed, upon the basis of loyalty to the standards, to be the true Church of Scotland. This has been notoriously true of the Free Church, and it is just as true that the Fathers of secession appealed, when they left, to the first “free reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland,” so that Dr. Buchanan maintains in his “Ten years’ Conflict” that the United Presbyterian Church should have joined the Free Church at once. We have nothing then to do with declarations upon the Headship, which nobody doubts, or spiritual independ-

ence, which, as stated in the Confession of Faith, we all receive, or disclaimers of persecuting principles, which are an ungracious impeachment of our noble confession, or any exceptions or supplements whatever; nor were ever the catechisms or the Directory standards of the church before separation took place. Excellent as these are, and we yield to none in our admiration of them and habitual use of them, they were not standards before separation, and to make them standards now is to launch forth a new church. It is to create a new body. It is to restore a church more nearly resembling the Covenanters than the church as it was. To change the standards either by additional explanation, supplement or diminution—by adding or taking away—is to make *new* standards and call into existence a new church. If any of the negotiating bodies, since separation, have acquired new standards, or discovered imperfections in the old, which rendered supplemental clauses necessary, then let them so say. We are satisfied with the Westminster Confession in the mean time, and to expect our church to alter her standards by receiving into them new clauses representing new views, which her seceding children have forged since they began to travel in a separate road, is surely unreasonable. But if reunion is desired and upon the same footing, and all parties claim to represent truly our ancient church, then let them simply without note or comment accept of our ancient standards—namely, the Westminster Confession only. If anything were added to this, it could only be the Books of Discipline and the Book of Common Order. We do not suppose the Westminster Confession to be perfect, or to be aught but a subordinate standard of our church: but we do suppose that it is a perfect declaration of what all parties were when they separated, and what they have all claimed to be ever since. So that if any amendment is to be made, it should be by the church *when reunited and not now*. To add any clauses now to a basis of union anent persecution or the office of the civil magistrate, is to make an insinua-